

THE SHROUD

EPISODE 2

"SAVIOUR"

by

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THE SHROUD. EPISODE 2. SAVIOUR.

EXT. ROAD TO JERUSALEM - DAY

SEVEN YEARS AGO

A group of PILGRIMS make their way on foot down a long stone roadway. There's roughly fifty of them or so, a mixed bag of poor families, some pulling donkeys and wooden trollies which contain all their worldly belongings. They are being led by a small group of monks, among them STEFANO -- slightly less grey in the beard, but roughly still looks the same.

A paltry pair of KNIGHTS on horseback gallop slowly alongside the group, matching their laborious pace.

Walking beside Stefano, a younger monk named NUNZIO glares at the road ahead with trepidation.

NUNZIO

At this rate, we should reach
Damascus within the year, to talk of
nothing of Jerusalem.

STEFANO

You sound disillusioned, Brother
Nunzio.

NUNZIO

How can you not be? This is not the
journey to the Holy Land that we
were promised.

He motions to the two knights.

NUNZIO

You call that protection? Two measly
Knights of Rhodes? This is dangerous
territory for Christians, and this
is all the Hospitaller can spare
us?!

STEFANO

We are fortunate they gave us any at
all.

NUNZIO

How can they hope to protect
pilgrims if they are spread thin
across the holy lands?

STEFANO

They do God's work, in the name of
Christ. As do we. We should give
thanks for what blessings we are
granted.

Nunzio turns away, ashamed.

NUNZIO

Of course. You're right, Brother
Stefano. Forgive my foolish pride.

Stefano gives him an affectionate pat on the shoulder.

Suddenly they hear a PIERCING SHRIEK from the back of the
group--

Stefano spins to find a horde of MAMLUK SOLDIERS emerging
from the shrubs and trees, RACING TOWARD THEM WITH RAISED
SCIMITAR SWORDS--

Panic overtakes the group as THE MAMLUKS LUNGE -- CUTTING
DOWN man, woman, and child alike--

THE TWO KNIGHTS JUMP INTO THE FRAY on horseback -- TAKING
DOWN a couple of the Mamluk mercenaries--

Several Mamluks JAB THEIR SPEARS into the knights' horses --
driving them to the ground--

THE MAMLUKS SWARM on the two fallen knights and PERFORATE
THEIR CORPSES with their bloodied scimitar blades--

Nunzio GRABS A FALLEN SPEAR and CHARGES at the Mamluks -- who
CUT DOWN THE MONK with relative ease--

Stefano CRIES OUT as Nunzio crumbles to the ground in a
lifeless heap.

With only a few villagers and families remaining, Stefano
MOVES TO STAND protectively in front of them.

The Mamluks converge and surround them on all sides, hungry
for slaughter.

Stefano looks hopelessly to the heavens with closed eyes.

STEFANO

Lord Christ, have mercy on us in
this hour of darkness--

As a Mamluk RAISES HIS SWORD FOR THE DEATHBLOW--

A SWORDBLADE SUDDENLY BURSTS OUT FROM HIS CHEST--

The Mamluk falls dead, revealing his killer--

GEOFFROI DE CHARNY

Seven years younger, but still the fierce haunted look in his eyes.

Stefano looks upon the knight with reverence. His eyes briefly catch the Charny family crest engraved on his armored chestplate.

The Mamluks SCATTER as a SQUADRON OF FRENCH KNIGHTS descend upon them -- Charny ROARS, SWORD RAISED -- leading the knights with purpose--

CHARNY
FOR THE GLORY OF GOD!!

The French squadron proceed to DRIVE BACK THE MAMLUKS--

Stefano's gaze focuses on Charny, MOVING THROUGH THE MAMLUK WARRIORS like a man possessed -- CUTTING DOWN one and moving to the next like a dark angel --

Off Stefano's awestruck eyes... CUT TO-

TITLES: **THE SHROUD**

EXT. FARMLAND, CHARNY HOME - DAY

PIERRE-PERTHUIS, NORTHERN FRANCE

Back to present day 1342, picking up from last episode.

Stefano meekly approaches Charny, who is gathering his farming tools and getting ready to head inside.

STEFANO
Geoffroi de Charny. Can we talk?

Charny stops. Looks at the monk.

CHARNY
Can I help you, Father?

STEFANO
Brother, actually. Stefano. I am abbot of the Benedictine monastery in Monte Cassino.

Stefano steps closer, glaring at Charny in awe.

STEFANO
My God, it really is you.

CHARNY
I'm sorry?

STEFANO
You don't remember, do you.

Charny just stares at him, baffled.

STEFANO
No, of course not. How could you? It was a long time ago. I'm sure you've been on many such campaigns.

CHARNY
Apologies, abbot. I'm afraid I'm at a loss.

STEFANO
It was seven years ago. We were on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, when we were attacked somewhere on the road in Antioch. The marauders, they came from nowhere. They killed the knights who were sanctioned to protect us.

Charny listens, unsure where this is going.

As Stefano recounts the story, he looks to the sky, as if in a trance.

STEFANO
Just when all hope seemed lost, I prayed to our Lord Jesus for mercy, and then you appeared... like the archangel Michael himself...

His eyes meet Charny's, intense.

STEFANO
You saved us all.

He touches Charny's arm.

STEFANO
You saved me. In the name of God.

Charny pulls away, slightly awkward.

CHARNY
Perhaps it was a long time ago. As you say.

CUT TO -- JEANNE -- who emerges from the house

She sees Charny and Stefano in the distant field, in a quiet discussion amongst themselves.

She continues to watch them with a strange curiosity.

CUT BACK TO -- CHARNY AND STEFANO

as Charny starts to move off toward the house. Stefano follows.

STEFANO

There is a matter I was hoping to discuss with you.

Charny cuts him off.

CHARNY

Abbot--

STEFANO

Stefano.

CHARNY

--if this has anything to do with the Church, I'm sure Father Gabriel at our local parish would be more than willing to assist you.

STEFANO

What I seek, no priest can help with. Only a soldier.

He puts a hand on Charny's shoulder.

STEFANO

A soldier of Christ.

A despairing look comes over Charny.

CHARNY

That was a long time ago, abbot. I am no longer that man.

STEFANO

You fought for God?

CHARNY

Once. Now I fight for France.

STEFANO

Can you not fight for both? As you once did?

Charny smiles sadly.

CHARNY

It must have been a journey from Monte Cassino. The day's harvest was not much, but if you wish to join my wife and I for our meal, we would be more than willing to share what we have.

STEFANO

(smiles)

I would like that.

Stefano eagerly starts toward the house, but Charny holds him back a moment.

CHARNY

A meal only.

Stefano nods, gets the meaning, his excitement deflated, smile slipping away.

INT. CHARNY HOME - LATER

Charny, Jeanne, and Stefano sit quietly at the table, having a meal.

Jeanne watches curiously as the two men stare into their bowls and pick at their bean stew.

JEANNE

You have not told us how you know each other.

Stefano looks up. He and Charny exchange a quick glance.

STEFANO

I met your husband years ago.

Jeanne waits, expecting more.

Stefano looks at Charny again, unsure what he is allowed to say.

STEFANO

On a pilgrimage.

CHARNY

It was a long time ago.

JEANNE

And you have not seen each other since?

They stare down at their food, scoop another bite.

JEANNE
How did you find him?

STEFANO
The family crest.

Charny reacts.

STEFANO
I asked about it in my travels.
Followed the signs. When I arrived
here and finally saw the banner from
a distance, I knew I had found what
I was looking for.

JEANNE
All that way to find one man.

She looks at Charny, who simply eats his food.

Stefano notes the tension between the married couple.

STEFANO
We taught each other much back then.

Charny shoots him a look.

STEFANO
I merely wanted to thank him.

Charny nods. Resumes his meal, as does Stefano.

Jeanne returns to her food as well, watching the two men with
a keen eye.

INT. CHARNY HOME - LATER THAT EVENING

Charny and Jeanne usher Stefano toward the door.

STEFANO
I want to thank you again for
sharing your home and your blessings
with me, Madame Toucy.

JEANNE
Any friend of my husband's is a
friend of mine.

Charny glances awkwardly toward Stefano, who bows his head
humbly in thanks and exits the house.

Charny turns toward Jeanne.

CHARNY
I'll be but a moment.

EXT. CHARNY HOME - SAME

Charny steps outside the house, closing the door behind him.

CHARNY

Abbot --

Stefano stops. Turns around.

CHARNY

Thank you. For the discretion.

STEFANO

I did not want to cause any trouble.
But I am grateful for the
hospitality.

CHARNY

And I'm sorry again. I am not the
man you seek.

Stefano smiles sadly. Steps toward him.

STEFANO

The man I saw that day, fighting the
marauder army... it's the same man
who stands before me now.

CHARNY

Not quite the same.

Stefano looks up into the knight's haunted eyes.

STEFANO

Your faith has weakened in the years
since. I can see it.

Charny looks away, almost ashamed, but Stefano clasps his
shoulder with a reassurance.

STEFANO

Faith never truly dies. It lays
dormant. But it lays within you
still.

His face darkens.

STEFANO

There were times when my faith was
tested. The Lord tests me still.

He fidgets nervously as he reveals this--

STEFANO
One of my holy brothers has gone
missing.

Charny's attention is suddenly piqued.

CHARNY
Missing?

STEFANO
His name is Gianluca. He was on a
Venetian ship bound for
Constantinople, but the ship was
attacked by pirates -- soldiers of
Umur Bey.

CHARNY
What was your monk doing on a trade
ship?

STEFANO
Transporting something. A relic of
incredible significance.

He steps closer. Lowers his voice.

STEFANO
Have you heard of the shroud?

Charny subtly shakes his head no.

STEFANO
It is the cloth that was wrapped
around our Lord Jesus as he lay
buried in his tomb. A shroud which
now bears his earthly image,
miraculously seared into the fabric
by the sacred light of his
resurrection.

Charny gives him a dubious look.

CHARNY
Why are you telling me this?

STEFANO
It's the reason I'm here. Why I
sought you out.

Charny nods. Understands now.

CHARNY
You wish me to find your monk.

STEFANO

Rescue him, yes. And the shroud he carries.

Charny is about to respond, but Stefano holds up his hand.

STEFANO

I know, the demand appears futile. But Gianluca is newly ordained. Barely an initiate. It was I who brought him into the order. I feel a responsibility for his life.

He looks away solemnly.

STEFANO

In some ways, I look upon him as a father would a son.

CHARNY

If the Turks found him, there's a good chance he is dead. And your shroud lost.

Stefano nods sadly.

STEFANO

You may be right. I'm not sure if he lives still. It is a doubt I wrestle with constantly. But I will keep faith. I must. For if my faith falters, even a little, then he is dead. And this journey was for nothing.

A sudden realization dawns upon Charny.

CHARNY

You paid my ransom.

STEFANO

Not me. But the ones who sent me. Their coffers run deep.

Charny somberly shakes his head.

CHARNY

I don't think I can help you with this, abbot. The man of faith you witnessed in battle those years ago... he no longer exists.

Stefano puts a comforting hand on Charny's shoulder.

STEFANO

I will keep your faith with me for now.

He starts off.

STEFANO

I will remain in town for another two days still. I'll be at the Perthuis chapel. If you have a change of heart, you know where to find me. And if not...

He gives Charny one last look.

STEFANO

...you will never see me again.

He walks away, into the moonlight.

Off Charny, watching him go...

INT. DUNGEON CELL - DAY

SMYRNA, ANATOLIA

GIANLUCA sits on the floor of a dark, dank cell, a tiny sliver of sunlight peeking through a tiny crack in the mortar. His skin is damp with sweat and grime. A dirty plate of stale moldy bread sits untouched at his feet.

He clutches his brown leather satchel close to his chest, as he looks up toward the ceiling, eyes closed, silently mouthing a prayer.

The cell door suddenly swings open, startling the monk.

A Turk guard storms in carrying a small wooden bench, placing it in the far corner.

Gianluca watches curiously as the guard leaves as quickly as he came, leaving the cell door open.

UMUR BEY suddenly steps into frame, enters the cell, his stern aura emanating authority and control.

Gianluca presses his back up against the wall as Umur calmly takes a seat on the bench opposite the monk. Watches as a cockroach skitters atop the moldy bread.

UMUR

Apologies for the rank nourishment.

Gianluca simply glares at him. Says nothing.

UMUR

I must admit, you are a curiosity.
When my men brought you in, I was
given pause.

He nods toward the cell door.

UMUR

As you must have noticed, our cells
do not hold many occupants. We
seldom take prisoners, especially
Christian priests. In fact, some of
my men still think you should be put
to the sword.

Umur leans in.

UMUR

Some may call it fortune, but I
believe something protects you.

He points toward the satchel.

UMUR

That, perhaps. I know not.

Gianluca clutches tighter at the bag.

UMUR

Fear not, priest. No one will take
it from you. For now.

He sits up, lays back against the wall.

UMUR

My men dragged you in here, rope
around your neck. But you did not
squirm.

His eyes wander, lost in memory.

UMUR

In all my travels across the Holy
Land and beyond -- raiding and
pillaging, taking what we believe is
ours by right -- I have come across
many of your kind. Men who wear the
robes of Christian preachers... some
of those red robes more extravagant
and costly than anything I've seen
in any sultan's palace.

He raises his hand, pensive.

UMUR

To a man, when pressed with the sword, every single one of them begged for their life. It was clear in their eyes -- they feared death. I have never understood that.

He locks eyes with Gianluca, intense.

UMUR

For a people who believe in an eternal reward after this life -- as we do -- to be in the glorious presence of Allah -- why do they fear death? Would they not welcome it? Embrace it?

He makes a fist.

UMUR

They were terrified of leaving this life. But not you.

He leans in again.

UMUR

Here, alone, in a foreign land, surrounded by enemies. You never begged for mercy. Never pleaded for your life. Not once. It was then that I knew... you do not fear death.

Gianluca lets his guard down a bit. Taken by the Turk leader's words.

Umur gets up. A pair of guards suddenly enter the cell, one placing a chair next to Gianluca, helping him up gently from the floor and onto the chair. The other guard brings in a small wooden table and sets down a plate of fresh bread and an apple. The guards take away the moldy bread and leave.

Gianluca sits at the table, stunned by all this. Then glances up at Umur.

UMUR

Again, my apologies for the conditions. I hope this is more to your liking.

Umur leaves the cell, as the guards close the door behind him, leaving Gianluca alone, confused.

Slowly he reaches for the fresh bread. Breaks off a piece.

INT. DUNGEON CORRIDOR - LATER

Umur marches down a long corridor, passing a few guards along the way.

HAROUN watches as Umur walks right past him, without so much as a glance.

As Umur keeps walking away, Haroun suspiciously looks back the way he came, his eyes glaring toward the dungeon cells.

Off Haroun, rage simmering...

INT. CHARNY HOME - NIGHT

Charny sits at a table by candlelight, writing on a scroll of parchment. He dips his feathered pen in ink.

JEANNE (O.S)
Will you not come to bed?

Jeanne steps into frame wearing her night dress. Charny doesn't look up, focused on the parchment.

CHARNY
I'll be there shortly.

She leans in behind him, looking down at the writing.

JEANNE
A letter?

CHARNY
To the Dauphin Humbert de Viennois.
I am owed a great deal of monies for
prior services rendered and I intend
to get it.

JEANNE
For what purpose?

He looks up at her, hesitates to answer. Then resumes writing.

CHARNY
A personal matter.

JEANNE
If it concerns our welfare, do I not
have a right to know?

Charny winces, not eager to discuss this.

CHARNY

It seems the Avignon papacy is responsible for my release from prison.

JEANNE

Is that not a good thing? The Church deems you worthy of their attention.

CHARNY

I did not ask for their "attention". I need to raise a considerable amount of money in due course, hence this letter. I refuse to be indebted to the Church.

JEANNE

But I don't understand. Most men would view being liable to the Church a great honour.

CHARNY

As I said, it's a personal matter.

Jeanne takes a seat at the table next to him.

JEANNE

Since you've returned from combat, I have felt a... distance from you.

Charny stops writing.

CHARNY

I am sorry. There is much that weighs on my mind these days.

She touches his hand.

JEANNE

Can I not help?

Charny says nothing.

JEANNE

Does it concern the abbot?

CHARNY

There is nothing to discuss about him.

JEANNE

It did not appear so. He seemed to want something from you.

CHARNY

The matter is settled.

He gets up from the table. Looks out the window at the moon.

CHARNY

When I came home, I thought the months in battle would clear the sullen memories from my mind. But instead, when I look at you, I find the dark memories only sharper.

JEANNE

It's a long time past.

She gets up. Puts her arms around his shoulders.

JEANNE

My devotion is only to you. And to God. As it always has been.

CHARNY

(grim)

God does not require devotion.

Her arms slowly slide away from him.

JEANNE

Your heart still does not forgive?

CHARNY

It forgives.

He sits back down at the table. Resumes writing.

CHARNY

It does not forget.

She lingers a moment, hesitates to touch him.

But she leaves. Goes back to bed.

Charny stops writing. Shakes his head in regret.

EXT. COURTYARD, PALAIS DE LA CITÉ - DAY

PARIS, FRANCE

BEAUJEU spars with a couple of palace guards, practicing his swordplay.

The guard stabs his blade at him, but Beaujeu deftly flips his wooden sword and knocks the guard's blade from his grasp.

The second guard comes in with a sword lunge, but Beaujeu quickly plants his boot between the guard's legs and rams his blade into the man's chest, sending him stumbling back to the ground. Beaujeu points his sword at the fallen guard's throat.

BEAUJEU

Yield.

The guard nods. Beaujeu offers his hand and helps the guard up.

Beaujeu steals a quick glance up at the balcony. Notices QUEEN JOAN looking down at him with desirous eyes.

He smiles. Slips on his jacket.

INT. PALACE CORRIDOR -- MOMENTS LATER

Joan walks away hurriedly down the palace corridor.

BEAUJEU (O.S)

Hold it --

Beaujeu sneaks up from behind and grabs her arm, spinning her around.

BEAUJEU

You didn't think you would look at me like that and run off, would you?

QUEEN JOAN

You shouldn't be here.

BEAUJEU

Aren't you tired of this?

He backs her up against the wall.

BEAUJEU

Slinking around in dark corners like caged animals.

He works her neck with his tongue. She closes her eyes, unable to resist.

QUEEN JOAN

If we are seen together like this--

BEAUJEU

You enjoy the danger.

QUEEN JOAN

I cannot risk this. Not now.

Beaujeu wraps his arm around her waist, continues on her neck. She half-heartedly tries to pull away.

QUEEN JOAN

Philip will be leaving for Bethune
in a few days. I must remain chaste
till then.

BEAUJEU

Your supple flesh arouses me.

Joan throws her head back in ecstasy, giving in.

QUEEN JOAN

You are insatiable.

BEAUJEU

Among other things.

They hear feet shuffling closer. Joan pulls away, gives him a yearning look. Soon...

A palace guard appears around the corner.

GUARD

Monsieur Beaujeu...

Beaujeu spins around. Straightens his jacket. Runs a hand through his hair.

The guard watches them suspiciously for a moment.

GUARD

The king requests your presence.

Beaujeu nods. He takes a look back at Joan as he joins the guard and leaves.

Off Joan, trying to compose herself...

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

Beaujeu is escorted into the throne room, where KING PHILIP VI is standing by a bust of the previous king.

KING PHILIP VI

Leave us.

The guard leaves. Beaujeu watches him go, uneasy, then turns back toward the king.

Philip admires the bust for a moment.

KING PHILIP VI
My *cher* Edouard, how was your
training session this morning?

BEAUJEU
Good, my lord. Productive.

He turns toward Beaujeu. Smiles.

KING PHILIP VI
It has been quite a time, since
you've been on the field of battle.

BEAUJEU
It has been a while, yes.

Philip smiles again, but his eyes somber.

KING PHILIP VI
For me as well. They say a soldier
cannot be too long from the
battlefield. Life away from it
becomes a façade. Only with the
sword in hand does his true self
emerge.

BEAUJEU
There is truth in those words, lord.

KING PHILIP VI
I'm glad to hear it. I intend to
take you back where you belong.

BEAUJEU
(confused)
My lord?

Philip circles his throne, hands behind his back.

KING PHILIP VI
King Hugh of Cyprus has demanded our
aid in settling a dispute with the
Capetian House of Anjou. They are
still lording their claim of
Jerusalem over him, and he fears
this will weaken his stance against
any potential English incursion.

BEAUJEU
Cyprus?

KING PHILIP VI
You will secure his position and his
claim to the Holy Land, and ensure
his forces remain ready for any
threats from the English.

Beaujeu looks back toward the archway, his mind on Joan.

KING PHILIP VI
Is there a problem?

Beaujeu snaps back to attention.

BEAUJEU
No, lord.
(bows)
I serve at His Majesty's will.

KING PHILIP VI
Good. Also, take Sir Charny with
you. You will need a capable soldier
who demands respect from his men.

BEAUJEU
My lord, Sir Charny is back home,
after a long trial in English hands.

KING PHILIP VI
We spoke of a soldier's heart,
Edouard.

He steps closer to Beaujeu, puts a hand on his shoulder.

KING PHILIP VI
He longs for the battlefield. As you
do. As do I. He will come.

Beaujeu nods. Bows.

BEAUJEU
My lord.

He walks out of the throne room. Stops a moment, conflicted.
Looks down the empty corridor.

No sign of the queen.

EXT. SEA PORT - DAY

NEGROPONTE, GREECE

The large, bustling harbor on the seafront of the Aegean Sea
is teeming with activity. Dock workers unload ships and load
others, as other men anchor another vessel to the harbor with
ropes.

The city bailiff **PIETRO ZENO** steps off the vessel. The dock workers clear a path as he walks down the wooden planks, wearing a coat of authority. He points to a few of the workers as he walks, orders them to ready another ship for first light.

The workers murmur "Yes sir" as they rush to their tasks.

INT. CITY HALL - DAY

Zeno marches into the large city council building, making his way down a wide corridor, spear-armed guards bowing their heads as he strolls by, a couple of them acknowledging his presence by his formal title *bailo*.

INT. COUNCIL CHAMBERS - DAY

Zeno walks in the empty council chambers and shuts the door. He pauses a moment, takes in the quiet and solitude.

He moves toward a tray of drinks. Uncorks a bottle and pours a cup of wine. He brings the cup to his lips--

VOICE (O.S)

Nothing like the elixir of wine--

Zeno spins, startled, to find **BATELLO** standing in a dark corner.

BATELLO

-- at the end of a long, hard day.

ZENO

Batello?! How did you get in here?

Batello steps out of the shadows, a long cloak over his shoulders.

BATELLO

There are doors everywhere, seen and unseen... if one knows where to look.

ZENO

Only elected city officials can be in this hall.

BATELLO

My my, how an important title can inflate the ego... bailiff.

ZENO

It is not an easy task, to keep the peace.

BATELLO

Oh I'm sure your days are filled
with predicaments to solve.

ZENO

There are challenges, I admit.

BATELLO

Oh without doubt. Land grabs.
Territorial disputes. Maintaining a
fickle truce.

Zeno's patience wears thin.

ZENO

What do you want, Batello?

Batello walks slowly around the council table.

BATELLO

I remember when your only concern
was the open sea. When to lower the
sails and when to raise them.

ZENO

That was a long time ago.

BATELLO

Aye, it was, but the fire of a
ship's captain never goes out.

Zeno heads toward the door.

ZENO

I don't have time for this.
(opens door)
Guard--

BATELLO

I'm sure you've heard about the
pope's crusade. To Smyrna.

Zeno reacts. A knowing glance.

A guard appears at the door.

GUARD

You called, bailiff?

Zeno looks at Batello. Then back at the guard.

ZENO

My mistake. Carry on.

The guard nods and leaves. Zeno shuts the door.

Batello points at him.

BATELLO
Ah, there's that fire I spoke of.

ZENO
What about it?

BATELLO
No doubt the thought of leading the
crusader fleet has crossed your
mind.

Zeno moves toward the tray of drinks.

ZENO
There are younger and more capable
men.

BATELLO
Younger, yes. But none more capable.

Zeno ponders his words.

BATELLO
I've just come from Venice. The word
around the Grand Council is they've
narrowed the choice down to two.

Zeno looks at him, curious.

ZENO
Who's the other?

Batello backs up slowly. Reaches into his cloak. Yanks out a
SEVERED HEAD.

Zeno gasps in shock, as Batello RAMS the severed head down on
the table.

BATELLO
Giuseppe Sforza.

ZENO
My God -- you're mad!

BATELLO
You know you want this. And you know
the Council will choose you. All I
did was make their choice easier.

Zeno backs away.

ZENO
No... not like this.

BATELLO

I'm disappointed, bailiff. I hoped you would have thanked me. After all, we did save your life, my brother and I. In the battle at Adramyttion.

ZENO

That debt was settled. When I cleared you of the murder of Yakhshi's son-in-law.

Batello suddenly grabs Zeno's coat.

BATELLO

It was necessary.

ZENO

For who? The battle was over, damn you! Yakhshi was dead. There was no reason to kill his son-in-law.

BATELLO

There's a reason for everything... given enough coin. Besides, your status was elevated. The name Pietro Zeno has become feared across all the Turkish nations.

ZENO

Am I supposed to thank you?

Batello attempts to contain his rage.

BATELLO

His Holiness will call on you to fight again. And all I ask is that my brother and I board your ship.

ZENO

There's no money in this.

BATELLO

There's remission. From all crimes, past, present and future.

ZENO

(scoffs)

You think the papal bull will grant you freedom from your crimes?

BATELLO

So it is written. The pope's decree is as binding as though from the Lord Christ himself.

ZENO
You're a madman, Batello. I owe you nothing.

Batello smiles. Backs off.

BATELLO
A shame, then, to see a man of such great repute, a champion of the Holy Church, arrested and tried for murder.

He runs his hand through Sforza's severed head on the table.

Zeno's eyes go wide.

ZENO
You wouldn't dare.

BATELLO
The request is simple. A place on your ship.

ZENO
This is your plan? Blackmail?

BATELLO
The outcome is what matters. Not the means.

He moves toward the door.

BATELLO
I will give you some time to reflect on it. But not too long. The Council will make their decision soon.

He opens the door. Points at the severed head.

BATELLO
I'll keep that with you. As a symbol of our friendship.

He walks out the door.

Off Zeno, rattled eyes staring at the head on the table...

EXT. MARKET - DAY

Jeanne makes her way through the busy and crowded market square, a basket under her arm. She peruses the stalls of fruits and vegetables, picks up a potato.

GABRIEL (O.S)
The pickings are fresh today.

Jeanne turns to find FATHER GABRIEL behind her. He points at the potato.

GABRIEL
Don't you agree?

JEANNE
This late in the autumn as well. Tis truly a blessing.

GABRIEL
Indeed.

Jeanne resumes sifting through the vegetables.

JEANNE
Something I can help you with, Father?

GABRIEL
I was hoping you could shed some light on something.

JEANNE
Oh?

GABRIEL
You've met Brother Stefano. The abbot of Monte Cassino.

Jeanne reacts a moment. Brings an apricot up to her nose, sniffs it.

JEANNE
I have made his acquaintance, yes. He is a friend of my husband's.

GABRIEL
He is staying with me at the chapel for a couple of days.

JEANNE
Is there a problem?

GABRIEL
No, of course not. Any brother in Christ is always welcome in my home.

Jeanne nods. Continues looking through the stalls.

JEANNE
I don't understand how I can be of any assistance here.

GABRIEL

I do not wish to pry in family affairs. He wants something of your husband. What that is, is none of my concern. My only concern is for my church. And the people of this town.

Jeanne stops. Looks at him.

JEANNE

You think his presence here is endangering this town?

GABRIEL

All I know is--

He steps closer, lowers his voice.

GABRIEL

All I know is, your husband is a soldier. He has doubtless made many enemies over the years. And now, with our king in a war with the English, well... you can see why someone seeking his services can raise concern among our people.

JEANNE

All I see is a frightened priest.

She tries to brush past him, but he grips her shoulders, his tone urgent.

GABRIEL

This is a dangerous time. You've seen what the English have done to our villages and towns. Look at Morlaix, where your husband was captured and held prisoner. His captors will want their vengeance.

Jeanne notices the stares from onlookers.

JEANNE

Father, this is not appropriate.

CUT TO- **CHARNY** -- walking through the market, carrying some tools and a shovel. About to enter a repair shop.

He suddenly spots Jeanne and Gabriel in the food stalls, in heated discussion.

Charny hesitates a moment. Continues watching them from a distance. Buried feelings bubbling to the surface.

He thinks better of it. Heads for the shop.

But he stops again, his anger taking over.

He heads straight for them.

CUT BACK TO- **JEANNE AND GABRIEL** -- as Gabriel suddenly becomes aware of his surroundings. Releases his grip on Jeanne.

GABRIEL
My apologies.

Jeanne attempts to move past him.

JEANNE
You are making too much of the
monk's visit.

GABRIEL
Perhaps. But I would advise you at
least think about it. For the good
of the townspeople.

He steps closer. Looks deeply into her eyes.

GABRIEL
And for yourself. I could not bear
to see harm come upon you.

Jeanne looks up into the priest's eyes, her mood softening.

CHARNY (O.S)
Is everything all right?

Jeanne and Gabriel spin to find Charny standing there. Jeanne immediately moves to his side.

JEANNE
Yes, my dear.

GABRIEL
Geoffroi. How good to see you again.

Gabriel awkwardly embraces him.

CHARNY
And you, Father Gabriel. All is well
with you?

GABRIEL
Yes, of course. I was just speaking
to your wife of the good abbot
Stefano.

CHARNY

I hope he is not too much of an imposition.

GABRIEL

On the contrary. His steadfast faith inspires mine.

CHARNY

Glad to hear it.

An awkward silence.

JEANNE

Shall we take our leave, love?

CHARNY

As you wish. Father, good to see you again.

GABRIEL

Likewise.

As Charny and Jeanne leave the stall, Gabriel watches them walk away with troubled eyes.

EXT. PAPAL EMBASSY - DAY

REPUBLIC OF GENOA, ITALY

A warm day. Several officials mill about outside the large embassy building.

A horse-drawn carriage pulls up. A couple of papal Swiss guards move to open the door, carefully helping HENRI out of the carriage.

Henri takes a moment, looks up at the embassy, the sun in his eyes.

INT. EMBASSY CHAMBERS - DAY

Henri is escorted inside the embassy chambers, where **MARTINO ZACCARIA** sits at his desk, writing on a sheet of parchment. Wearing a hat and grey beard, Zaccaria meets the bishop with a stern, hard look.

ZACCARIA

Henri d'Asti.

He gets up, walks around his desk to formally kiss the bishop on the cheeks.

ZACCARIA

Good to see you again.

HENRI

I appreciate the welcome, Ambassador Zaccaria.

Zaccaria motions toward the chair.

ZACCARIA

Please.

They both sit.

ZACCARIA

I've received word of the pontiff's plan for a crusade.

HENRI

Then you know why he chose you specifically to lead the papal army. After all, your reputation does precede you.

ZACCARIA

I suppose my name does carry some weight among the Turks.

HENRI

More than that, I would say. I have heard you called "the terror of Asia Minor" by some sources.

ZACCARIA

I'm afraid my duties now are not as... temporal as they once were.

HENRI

His Holiness looks to change that.

ZACCARIA

I've become quite accustomed to my new role here. Ambassador to the Holy See does offer quite a few privileges.

HENRI

You will be serving the Church still. But in a more... assertive manner.

Zaccaria gets up from his desk. Walks around it.

ZACCARIA

Why would I leave all this to lead a dangerous crusade against the Turks?

HENRI

Because you've done it before. And to great effect. You already maintain a thousand infantry and four galleys on constant alert along the Turkish peninsula. With this crusade, we are only reinforcing our presence.

Zaccaria mulls this over for a moment.

HENRI

But more importantly, you've fought our enemy before. You know the Emirate of Aydin intimately.

ZACCARIA

Umur Bey.

HENRI

You know how he acts. How he thinks. Who better to lead the charge.

Zaccaria walks over to the window, pensive.

Henri gets up. Steps over to him.

HENRI

But I also know that your heart is perhaps set on a greater prize.

ZACCARIA

I've let that go, Henri. You know this.

HENRI

I also know that it still preys on your mind. I've read your letters to the Latin Emperor. You still believe the island of Chios is yours by right.

ZACCARIA

(bitter)

It's my family home. That Byzantine usurper Kantakouzenos has no claim to that place.

He turns to face Henri.

ZACCARIA

It is mine by right. Surely you can see that.

HENRI

And it could be yours again one day.
But His Holiness demands your focus
on our current task. His blessed
crusade must take precedence above
all else.

Zaccaria sits down again, resigned to his duty.

HENRI

Do not fall to temptation. Remember,
you will lead the papal army, but
I am in command -- the pontiff's
representative on this holiest of
missions.

He gives Zaccaria a steely glare.

HENRI

Umur Bey is the target. Is that
clear?

On Zaccaria, begrudgingly accepting...

INT. DUNGEON CELL - DAY

Inside Gianluca's cell, he and Umur Bey sitting on their
benches, in mid discussion. The monk appears more well
rested.

UMUR

The other faiths have always held a
certain fascination for me.

Gianluca listens quietly.

UMUR

They diverge into different paths,
but they must all have a central
focus. A point of origin, as it
were.

Umur leans in.

UMUR

Do you not see a similarity, priest?
A place of convergence between our
beliefs?

He leisurely points to the monk's satchel.

UMUR

What's in the bag? An item of great
significance no doubt.

Gianluca calmly looks at his satchel.

UMUR

It gives you strength. A strength no earthly weapon can ever hope to achieve.

He leans in again. Almost pleading.

UMUR

I wish to share in your strength. To understand what drives you.

INT. DUNGEON CORRIDOR - SAME

Haroun marches down the dungeon corridor, simmering with fury. He approaches a guard standing by the door.

HAROUN

Where is the bey?

GUARD

He has asked not to be disturbed.

Haroun GRABS THE GUARD and SLAMS him against the wall.

HAROUN

I said where is he?!

INT. GIANLUCA'S CELL - SAME

UMUR

You risked your life on that ship to protect your precious cargo. And now it does the same for you. That kind of power can change the world.

He smiles sadly.

UMUR

Perhaps it is a power that transcends faith. Transcends gods even.

He gets up.

UMUR

After all, we share the same god, do we not?

He heads for the door.

GIANLUCA

Gianluca.

Umur stops, taken aback by the monk's first word.

GIANLUCA
My name is Gianluca.

Umur nods respectfully. Then opens the door and leaves the cell.

INT. CASTLE - MOMENTS LATER

Umur walks into the throne room to find HAROUN BLOCKING HIS PATH--

UMUR
What is this?

HAROUN
Do you take joy in mocking us?

UMUR
Of what do you speak?

Haroun points toward the dungeon cells.

HAROUN
Instead of killing the Christian priest as we should have done from the start, you feed him. Share words with him. Treat him as equal.

UMUR
Watch your tongue, Haroun.

HAROUN
You threaten me? *He* is the infidel, not I.

UMUR
I would not expect you to understand.

HAROUN
I understand enough. You are weak.

UMUR
You tread dangerously, soldier.

HAROUN
This is an affront to Allah.

Haroun draws his sword.

HAROUN
I will do what you could not.

As Umur reaches for his sword, FARIK AND A SQUAD OF TURK SOLDIERS suddenly storm into the room -- GRAB HAROUN--

HAROUN
You planned this?!

UMUR
Your actions have become
increasingly erratic.

HAROUN
I have been nothing but loyal.

UMUR
Your rage clouds your judgment. You
are no longer in control.

He motions to Farik and the other soldiers.

UMUR
Take him to the cells.

FARIK
Yes, bey.

Haroun defiantly tries to wrench himself free as they DRAG HIM OFF--

HAROUN
The priest has possessed you!
Possessed all of you!

Umur closes his eyes as Haroun's SCREAMS continue to echo off screen--

HAROUN (O.S)
YOU are the infidels!! Do you hear
me?! The Christian shall perish--

Umur bitterly slams his fist on the throne.

INT. DOGE'S PALACE - DAY

VENICE, ITALY

The Venetian Grand Council is assembled in the massive, gold ornate chamber of the Council Palace, some two hundred city and government officials and magistrates gathered here.

The Doge of Venice, BARTOLOMEO GRADENIGO, speaks from his chair.

GRADENIGO

Distinguished members of the Council, let us bring the next article of the day to our attention.

Standing somewhere in the back of the chambers, hidden away from view, Batello leans in the corner, arms crossed, hooded cloak concealing him somewhat. His brother NICO stands at his side.

GRADENIGO

His Holiness, Pope Clement the Sixth, has heard our concerns regarding the continued attacks on our trade ships by the Turkish pirates. These attacks have come at a great cost to our local businesses and merchants. The situation has become intolerable.

He looks over the grand assembly.

GRADENIGO

Now as you well know, the pontiff has called a holy crusade to Smyrna, where resides the Emirate of Aydin -- Umur Bey -- to put an end to his reign of terror on our ships. The crusade shall be led by his Latin Patriarch, Bishop Henri d'Asti, as well as Ambassador Martino Zaccaria, who will lead the papal armies.

Murmurs and nods around the assembly.

GRADENIGO

This leaves the vote to us, to select the man who will lead our Venetian fleet. We presented two very capable candidates, however one of them, Giovanni Sforza, appears to have gone missing.

More unsettled murmurs from the gathered men.

In the back, Batello rubs his fingers together, watching the reaction with a curious eye.

GRADENIGO

And so, I present to you, our
candidate to lead our forces into
battle against the Turks, an
accomplished and proven captain who
has vowed to restore order to our
livelihoods, and to bring the wrath
of God upon the Turkoman hordes --
PIETRO ZENO.

The assembled Council members applaud as Zeno walks down the middle aisle, approaches the podium.

Batello grins as he watches the proceedings unfold.

Zeno stops before the podium. Turns toward the crowd.

ZENO

Distinguished members of the Grand
Council, it shall be my great honor
to lead our forces on this holy
crusade. *FOR GOD, AND FOR COUNTRY!*

The Council erupts into roars of applause again.

Zeno catches a glimpse of Batello in the back, their eyes locked. An almost imperceptible sneer comes across Zeno's face.

Batello smiles as he leans in to Nico.

BATELLO

It seems our fortunes have turned,
brother. Fate smiles upon us at
last.

Off Batello's sinister eyes...

INT. CHARNY HOME - NIGHT

Charny and Jeanne sit quietly at the table, having their meal in silence.

Jeanne steals a quick glance at Charny, unsure how to penetrate his steely wall.

CHARNY

It was a good harvest today.

Jeanne reacts, surprised.

JEANNE

Yes. We dine well this night.

She looks at him again, hesitant to broach the subject. Takes a chance.

JEANNE
Geoffrey... today, at the market...

CHARNY
Forget it.

JEANNE
Gabriel approached me.

CHARNY
I will hear nothing more of it.

JEANNE
Will you not let me tell my side of it?

CHARNY
There's nothing to tell.

JEANNE
If I cannot unburden myself--

CHARNY
Enough!

Charny gets up from the table.

JEANNE
I did not mean--

CHARNY
What did you mean, then, *hmm*? In public with him? In full view of everyone?

JEANNE
It was an innocent conversation.

CHARNY
Do you mean to hurt me? To humiliate me? Have I not been humiliated enough?

Jeanne gets up. Steps toward him.

JEANNE
You know I never wish to hurt you.

CHARNY
You have once. Can it not happen again?

This stings Jeanne. Her eyes water as emotions well up.

JEANNE

Am I immune to loneliness? You cannot know. To sit here, months, nay years at a time, in an empty home. No husband. No children.

She begins to sob.

JEANNE

Can you not deign to know what that does to a woman? To not know if you are even alive?!

CHARNY

Do you not think I do not feel the same things? Fighting wars for a God I no longer believe in? Do you think I am not afflicted with temptations when I am away from you?

He turns away. Wracked with emotion.

CHARNY

I do not need a God to guide my decisions. I have my morality. That is enough to walk the path of righteousness.

He turns back to face her.

CHARNY

It should have been enough for you as well.

JEANNE

We are not the same person. Perhaps I am not as strong as you. But I will not let you undermine my faith.

A sudden fury overcomes him. He heads for the door.

CHARNY

Then perhaps the good father can explain your actions better.

JEANNE

Where are you going?

But Charny is out the door, leaving Jeanne standing there, a look of worry...

INT. CHAPEL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Father Gabriel kneels by the votive candles, in quiet prayer.

CHARNY (O.S)

Father...

CHARNY STORMS into the chapel -- FISTS CLENCHED--

GABRIEL

Geoffrey?

Charny suddenly GRABS HIM by the frock -- LIFTS HIM off his knees--

CHARNY

Let's have a talk.

He THROWS HIM to the floor.

GABRIEL

Geoffrey, please--

CHARNY

What did you speak to my wife about?

GABRIEL

I don't understand--

CHARNY

Today. At the market.

GABRIEL

Geoffrey, please, let's talk about this with a clear mind.

CHARNY

Do you think me a fool?

GABRIEL

Of course not.

CHARNY

You were supposed to be a man of the cloth. A man of God. Do your vows mean nothing?

GABRIEL

Please, Geoffrey, think on this.

CHARNY

Do not dare to speak my name.

STEFANO suddenly enters the chapel, startled by the noise. He notices Gabriel on the ground.

STEFANO
Sir Charny--

CHARNY
Stay out of this, abbot.

STEFANO
Please, don't do anything you will regret.

CHARNY
My life is a flood of regrets.

He suddenly GRABS GABRIEL -- LIFTS HIM with one hand, WINDS BACK A FIST with the other--

CHARNY
What's one more?

STEFANO
Charny--

CHARNY
Do you still love my wife, Father?

GABRIEL
(stammers)
I -- I--

CHARNY
SPEAK!

Gabriel starts to weep.

GABRIEL
I do... I do...

He shakes his head, trying to wipe the memories from his mind.

GABRIEL
She came to me for comfort, when you were away at war. She was lonely.

Charny clenches his fist tighter, knuckles white, as Gabriel pleads--

GABRIEL
It was an affair of the heart only, not of the flesh. I swear it. I swear it.

He raises his hands.

GABRIEL
Every night I beg God for
forgiveness. I still do. I beg you
now as well.

Charny RAISES HIS FIST --

CHARNY
I am not God.

Gabriel cowers in fear, and just AS CHARNY IS ABOUT TO
STRIKE--

VOICE (O.S)
GEOFFREY!!

A HAND REACHES INTO FRAME and pulls Charny's arm back. Drags
him away from the priest.

Charny SPINS AROUND -- winds his fist back to see--

BEAUJEU -- holding him back--

Charny's eyes go wide. He relents, lowers his fist, slowly
coming out of his rage-filled stupor.

CHARNY
Edward...?!?

Behind Beaujeu, JEANNE comes running into the chapel. Casts
her gaze over the scene.

JEANNE
My God...

Charny turns around, looks at Gabriel, who is sobbing and
whimpering on the ground.

CHARNY
What have I done...?

He steps forward hesitantly. Tries to offer his hand but
can't bring himself to do it.

CHARNY
Forgive me...

Charny turns to Jeanne, tears welling in his eyes.

He backs away from everyone. Ashamed.

He turns toward Stefano.

CHARNY

Maybe I will join your crusade after
all, abbot.

Charny slips out of the chapel. Beaujeu follows him outside.
Leaving everyone shocked into silence.

Except for Stefano, who glares toward the departing Charny, a
hopeful look...

FADE OUT